

Message Text

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SUBJECT: 21ST UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL TAKES MAJOR
DECISIONS ON FINANCIAL CRISIS AND FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 283820; (B) STATE 291438 (NOTAL)

VIENNA ALSO FOR UNIDO, PARIS ALSO FOR UNESCO, ROME ALSO FOR
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1. SUMMARY: A. THE UNDP HAS JUST COMPLETED ITS CRITICAL
21ST GOVERNING COUNCIL (GC) SESSION DURING WHICH IMPORTANT
DECISIONS WERE REACHED ON THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE
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PROGRAMMING LEVELS FOR THE NEXT CYCLE, 1977-1981. THE
MOOD OF THE COUNCIL WAS TO MAKE A SERIOUS-MINDED REVIEW OF
THE SOURCES OF ITS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AND TO ASSIST
NEW ADMINISTRATOR BRADFORD MORSE (U.S.) IN HIS QUEST FOR

EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS. DECISIONS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL WERE REACHED BY CONSENSUS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEVELOPING, DEVELOPED AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. A LIKELY EXCESS THIS YEAR OF DOLS 40 MILLION IN PROJECTED EXPENDITURES OVER RESOURCES BASED IN LARGE PART ON OVER EXPENDITURE IN 1975, LED THE COUNCIL TO ACCEPT SIGNIFICANT CUTS IN EXPENDITURES AND A SLOWDOWN IN IMPLEMENTING NEW PROJECTS

IN 1976. AT THE SAME TIME THE ADMINISTRATOR WAS ENJOINED TO TAKE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE PROGRAM'S RESOURCES BY COLLECTING ARREARAGES IN CONTRIBUTIONS AND ASSESSED COSTS DUE FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES, AND BY FINDING IMPROVED WAYS TO USE NON-CONVERTIBLE SOCIALIST COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS. PROVISIONAL APPROVAL WAS GIVEN FOR DOLS 3-3.3 BILLION SPENDING RANGE AND FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SPENDING QUOTAS (INDICATIVE PLANNING FIGURES, IPF'S) WITHIN THAT CEILING FOR THE 2ND PROGRAMMING CYCLE, 1977-81. THIS INCLUDED A SUBSTANTIAL SHIFT OF RESOURCES TO THE 50 POOREST COUNTRIES.

B. IN OUR VIEW A SOLID BASIS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR ADMINISTRATOR MORSE TO CONTINUE WITH AN AUSTERITY PROGRAM, IN 1976 AND IMPROVED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INCLUDING, ABOVE ALL, BETTER FINANCIAL REPORTING FROM EXECUTING AGENCIES. HAVING AUTHORITY TO PROCEED TO PLAN PROVISIONALLY FOR THE 2ND CYCLE WITH AN ASSUMPTION OF INCREASING RESOURCE AVAILABILITY SHOULD ENABLE MOST COUNTRY PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE WITHOUT SERIOUS LOSS OF MOMENTUM. WHEN ASKED, U.S.MISSIONS SHOULD SUPPORT FORWARD PLANNING FOR SECOND CYCLE.

C. DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF INQUIRIES FROM POSTS REGARDING THE IMPACT OF THE UNDP'S FINANCIAL STRINGENCY ON COUNTRY PROGRAMS AND THIS MESSAGE ALSO ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY BACKGROUND FOR POSTS TO DRAW ON IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND UN AGENCY OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE 21ST UNDP GC CONCLUDED IN NEW YORK FEBRUARY 4, HAVING REACHED FORMAL "DECISIONS" BY CONSENSUS OF THE 48 MEMBER COUNCIL ON A NUMBER OF CRUCIAL FINANCIAL ISSUES DESCRIBED BELOW. SOURCES OF CURRENT FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WERE GIVEN FULL AND DETAILED AIRING IN COMMITTEE AND PLENARY SESSIONS. IT BECAME CLEAR TO GC THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL MAJOR FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CRISIS: (A) VERY RAPID RECENT GROWTH IN PROGRAM EXPENDITURES, (B) HIGH RATE OF WORLD INFLATION, PARTICULARLY EXPERTS COSTS, (C) ACCUMULATIONS OF DIFFICULT (NON-CONVERTIBLE) CURRENCIES, PARTICULARLY FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, (D) ARREARAGES IN PAYMENTS OF VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS,

ASSESSED COSTS, SHARED COSTS, ETC., (E) SHORTFALL IN EXPECTED VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SOME DONORS, EVEN THOUGH OVERALL CONTRIBUTION LEVEL CONTINUES TO RISE.

3. UNDP DECISION ON THE CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION: MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE GC "DECISION" ARE AS FOLLOWS.

A. WHILE EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO COMPLETE FIRST CYCLE (1972-76) IPF EXPENDITURES IN 1976, UNSPENT COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS FROM THE FIRST CYCLE MAY BE CARRIED OVER TO THE SECOND CYCLE AS AGREED IN MANILA IN JUNE 1974

B. THE ADMINISTRATOR'S MINIMUM PLANNING LEVEL OF DOLS 370 MILLION FOR PROGRAM EXPENDITURES IN 1976 WAS ACCEPTED. THIS COMPARES WITH EXPENDITURES OF ABOUT DOLS 410 MILLION IN 1975 AND REPRESENTS A SHARP DECREASE.

C. AN APPEAL FOR INCREASES IN VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS AND EARLY PAYMENT IN 1976 WAS MADE.

D. PAYMENT OF A VARIETY OF ARREARAGES (IN WHICH MANY LDC'S ARE MAJOR OFFENDERS) WAS URGED.

E. RECIPIENT COUNTRIES IN A POSITION TO DO SO WERE INVITED TO CONSIDER BECOMING NET CONTRIBUTORS.

F. THE "REPHASING" OF COUNTRY PROGRAMS IN 1976 TO REDUCE EXPENDITURES SHOULD:
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(I) INCLUDE FULL PRIOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE RECIPIENT GOVERNMENT,

(II) AVOID AS FAR AS POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS IN ONGOING PROJECTS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 1976 AND 1977,

(III) CAUSE MINIMUM DISRUPTION IN PROJECT EXECUTION,

(IV) GIVE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION TO CONTINUATION OF ALL PROJECTS INVOLVING THE POOREST COUNTRIES AND THE "MOST VULNERABLE STRATA OF THE POPULATION," AND

(V) NOT INTERRUPT FORMULATION, APPRAISAL AND APPROVAL OF PROJECTS FOR THE SECOND CYCLE.

G. THE ADMINISTRATOR WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO MINIMIZE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OVERHEAD EXPENDITURES.

H. THE PROGRAM SHOULD MAKE GREATER USE OF NON-CONVERTIBLE SOCIALIST-COUNTRY CURRENCIES IN PAYMENT OF

EXPERTS AND CONTRACTORS FOR GOODS AND SERVICES FROM THESE COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE LARGE (DOLS 32 MILLION) HOLDINGS OF THE CURRENCIES.

I. TO AVOID LIQUIDITY PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE AND TO KEEP EXPENDITURES WITHIN LIMITS OF RESOURCES, IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT:

(I) THE OPERATIONAL RESERVE BE REPLENISHED ON A FULLY LIQUID BASIS, AT LEAST UP TO THE AUTHORIZED DOLS 150 MILLION LEVEL;

(II) FINANCIAL FORECASTING BE IMPROVED AND EXPENDITURES CONTROLLED THROUGH MORE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF BUDGETING AND PROGRAMMING, AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION. TO ACHIEVE THIS THE TIMELY FLOW OF RELIABLE INFORMATION AMONG UNDP HEADQUARTERS, RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES OFFICES AND THE EXECUTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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AGENCIES IS REQUIRED.

J. ADMINISTRATOR WAS REQUESTED TO GIVE PROGRESS REPORTS ON MANY OF ABOVE ISSUES AT THE 22ND GC SESSION IN JUNE 1976.

4. LONGER-TERM PROGRAM PLANNING FOR THE 2ND CYCLE: THE COUNCIL'S "DECISION" ON THE QUESTION INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

(A) ENDORSED IN PRINCIPLE THE ADMINISTRATOR'S PROPOSALS FOR THE ALLOCATION OF INDICATIVE PLANNING FIGURES (IPF'S) FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROGRAMS FOR 1977-81 ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISIONS. (THE ACCEPTED FORMULA FOR THE CALCULATION OF A COUNTRY'S IPF IS BASED UPON PER CAPITA GNP AND POPULATION LEVELS,

WITH ADDITIONAL SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR THE POOREST COUNTRIES).

(B) THE PROVISIONAL REPEAT PROVISIONAL ANNUAL INCREASE IN PROGRAM RESOURCES WAS SET AT 14 PERCENT WHICH PRESUMES A LEVEL OF SPENDING BETWEEN DOLS 3 TO 3.3 BILLION FOR THE SECOND CYCLE.

(C) ALTHOUGH COUNTRY, REGIONAL AND WORLDWIDE ALLOCATION OF INDICATIVE PLANNING FIGURES APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE, MAJOR DONORS BELIEVE THESE REPRESENT AN UPPER LIMIT FOR PLANNING PURPOSES AND WILL MOST LIKELY BE ENDORSED AT THE

22ND GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING IN JUNE 1976 IN THE LIGHT
OF THE TOTAL RESOURCES THEN ASSUMED TO BE AVAILABLE.

(D) TO ASSURE THE DYNAMIC GROWTH OF RESOURCES, THE
COUNCIL URGED WIDER FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE UNDP,
PARTICULARLY BY: (I) DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MAKING RELATIVE-
LY SMALL CONTRIBUTIONS IN RELATION TO THEIR CAPACITY, AND
(II) FROM THOSE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AT THE UPPER END
OF THE GNP SCALE.

(E) THE COUNCIL SUGGESTED THAT COUNTRIES IN A POSI-
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TION TO DO SO SHOULD CONSIDER INDICATING THEIR CONTRIBU-
TION LEVELS FOR A LONGER PERIOD THAN THE USUAL ONE-YEAR
PLEDGE.

5. BRADFORD MORSE (U.S.) TOOK OVER AS NEW ADMINISTRA-
TOR OF THE UNDP FROM RUDOLPH PETERSON AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE SESSION. HE MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION WITH HIS SERIOUS
AND BUSINESS-LIKE APPROACH IN DEALING WITH THE AGENCY'S
FINANCIAL SITUATION. IN HIS CLOSING STATEMENT TO THE
COUNCIL, MORSE PROMISED MANAGEMENT REFORMS, PROMISED TO
WORK ENERGETICALLY TO MOBILIZE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES,
AND INDICATED HE WOULD PRESENT A PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE
FUTURE OF UNDP AT THE NEXT COUNCIL SESSION.

6. IT IS TOO SOON TO KNOW HOW ADMINISTRATOR WILL CARRY
OUT 1976 AUSTERITY PROGRAM AND IMPROVEMENT IN FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING. IT IS THE USG VIEW THAT COUNCIL
DECISIONS SUMMARIZED IN PARAS 3 AND 4 ABOVE OFFER OPPOR-
TUNITY FOR ADMINISTRATOR TO MOVE VIGOROUSLY IN SEEKING
SOLUTIONS TO MANY OF THE PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, IF THE PRO-
GRAM IS NOT TO HAVE VERY SUBSTANTIAL CUTBACKS IN 1976 AND
FURTHER LIMITATION IN THE SECOND CYCLE, UNTAPPED RESOURCES
SUCH AS ARREARAGES, UNUSABLE NON-CONVERTIBLE CURRENCIES
AND INCREASED CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE DEVELOPED AND THE
RICHER OF THE LDC'S WILL HAVE TO BE MOBILIZED.

7. POSTS IN RECEIVING REPORTS (OR COMPLAINTS) OF CUT-
BACKS IN UNDP PROGRAM SHOULD BE AWARE OF GENERALIZED
NATURE OF AUSTERITY MEASURES BOTH THOSE, ALREADY ORDERED
AND OTHERS FORTHCOMING AS A RESULT OF GC DECISIONS.
THESE MEASURES SHOULD HOWEVER BE CONSISTENT WITH DECISIONS
DISCUSSED IN PARA 3 AND PARTICULARLY 3(F) ABOVE. WHILE
DEPARTMENT CANNOT BE ARBITER OF THE ALMOST INEVITABLE
MISUNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN UNDP HEADQUARTERS, SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES AND RECIPIENT GOVERNMENTS IN THIS DIFFICULT
PERIOD, WE ARE INTERESTED IN KNOWING OF MAJOR PROBLEMS
ARISING AS A RESULT OF PROGRAM REPHASING AND/OR CUTBACKS.

8. YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT UNDP'S AUSTERITY MEASURES AND PLANNED IPF SPENDING LEVELS FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES DURING THE SECOND CYCLE IN NO WAY RESULT FROM U.S. DIS-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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ENCHANTMENT WITH UNDP, NOR FROM U.S. REACTION TO RECENT UNFAVORABLE GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTES. (FYI - UN AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES HAVE ATTRIBUTED THE UNDP FINANCIAL CRISIS TO CUTBACKS IN U.S. FUNDING FOR UNDP FOLLOWING GA ACTIONS.) U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS WERE REDUCED IN 1974 AND 1975 BUT YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT ADMINISTRATION HAS REQUESTED CONGRESS FOR SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNDP IN 1976 AND 1977. CONGRESS HAS ALREADY AUTHORIZED (THOUGH NOT APPROPRIATED) DOLS 120 MILLION FOR FY 1976 COMPARED WITH JUST UNDER DOLS 80 MILLION FOR FY 1975. YOU MAY WHERE USEFUL ALSO MENTION THAT THE U.S. HAS PAID ALL ITS PLEDGES IN FULL AND HAS MADE AN EARLY PAYMENT OF DOLS 40 MILLION TO THE UNDP IN EARLY JANUARY 1976 TO ASSIST IN OVERCOMING THE SHORT-TERM LIQUIDITY CRISIS AND AS PART OF OUR 1976 GRANT.

9. CRITERIA FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES (IPF) FOR 2ND CYCLE (REF: UNDP DOC. DP/166) PROVIDE THAT COUNTRIES WITH AN ANNUAL PER CAPITA GNP OF DOLS 700 AND ABOVE WILL RECEIVE NO INCREASE IN THIS IPF ABOVE THE FIRST CYCLE LEVEL. THIS WAS THE SUBJECT OF EXTENDED DEBATE BETWEEN THE RICHER LDC'S LIKE MEXICO, ARGENTINA AND MALTA AND THE POORER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY INDIA AND PAKISTAN; WE BELIEVE THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF PROVIDING PROGRAM INCREASES ONLY TO THE LESS-DEVELOPED NOW FIRMLY ESTABLISHED BY COUNCIL BUT STILL LIKELY TO BE DEBATED AGAIN. IT IS U.S. VIEW THAT COUNTRIES ABOVE THE DOLS 700 GNP PER CAPITA LEVEL IDEALLY SHOULD "GRADUATE" FROM RECEIVING ANY UNDP ASSISTANCE OR AT LEAST BECOME NET CONTRIBUTORS SHORTLY. IN COUNCIL, LATIN AMERICA CONTINUED TO RESIST THIS TREND IN PRINCIPLE.

10. THE INVITATION FOR 22ND GOVERNING COUNCIL TO MEET IN HAVANA IN JUNE 1976 HAS CAUSED THE U.S. DIFFICULTY FOR

SOME MONTHS. THE 21ST COUNCIL AGREED TO DELAY MAKING THE FINAL DECISION AS CUBA EXTENDED ITS INVITATION TO COVER JANUARY 1977 AS AN ALTERNATIVE. (FYI. POSTS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT MANY GOVERNMENTS IN ADDITION TO THE U.S. THOUGHT A JUNE 1976 GC MEETING IN CUBA WOULD BE INOPPORTUNE, IN PARTICULAR, IN VIEW OF THE ANGOLA CONTROL-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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VERY. THE ADMINISTRATOR WAS SUCCESSFUL IN SECURING THIS MODIFICATION OF THE CUBAN INVITATION. THE U.S. IS NOT LEADING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE HAVANA MEETING, BUT CERTAINLY STRONGLY PREFERS SESSIONS ELSEWHERE.)

11. COMMENT: UNDP SESSION SIGNIFICANT IN THAT SPIRIT OF COOPERATION RATHER THAN OF CONFRONTATION PREDOMINATED. CRUCIAL DECISIONS ON FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM ISSUES REACHED AFTER LONG NEGOTIATING SESSIONS, BUT RELATIVELY LITTLE BLOC POLARIZATION. THE MAJOR REASON IS THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REALIZE THAT CONFRONTATION IN THE UNDP CONTEXT ONLY LIKELY TO RESULT IN DECREASE IN VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE RICH COUNTRIES. FURTHER THERE WAS THE REVELATION OF THE INEVITABLE SPLIT BETWEEN THE RICHER AND POORER LDC'S AS THEY DISCUSSED HOW THE UNDP "PIE" SHOULD BE CUT DURING THE NEXT CYCLE.

12. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND UN AGENCY OFFICIALS, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE FOLLOWING POINTS BE STRESSED:

(A) RESULTS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL FAVORABLE DUE TO EFFECTIVE COOPERATION BY ALL MEMBERS IN DEALING WITH ISSUES.

(B) ALTHOUGH REDUCTIONS IN EXPENDITURES WILL BE NECESSARY, GOVERNMENTS WILL BE CONSULTED. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE MOMENTUM OF THE PROGRAM CAN BE MAINTAINED.

(C) HOWEVER, IF PROGRAM IS TO GROW AS PROJECTED, VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS WILL HAVE TO INCREASE, PARTICULARLY FROM COUNTRIES NOW IN A POSITION TO GIVE MORE. ALL ARREARAGES SHOULD BE PAID PROMPTLY.

(D) MUCH CLOSER FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM COORDINATION BETWEEN UNDP AND EXECUTING SPECIALIZED AGENCIES IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

(E) SOLUTIONS FOR THE PROBLEM OF NON-CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY MUST BE FOUND.
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(F) IPF CRITERIA FOR THE SECOND CYCLE, CAREFULLY DEVELOPED OVER SEVERAL YEARS, SHOULD NOT BE CHALLENGED.

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